BRECON RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT

of the

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH
for the year 1955.

Officials. Medical Officer of Health...T.C.R.George, M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., D.P.H.

Chief Sanitary Inspector....W.J.Rees, Sanitary Inspector's Certificate of the Royal Sanitary Institute and Sanitary Inspector's Examination Joint Board; Meat and Other Foods Certificate of the Royal Sanitary Institute, Diploma of the Royal Institute of Public Health and Hygeine.

Additional Sanitary Inspector...R.Taylor, M.S.I.A., M.R.I.P.H.H.

BRECON RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL

Report of the Medical Officer of Health

1955

Mr.Chairman,Ladies and Gentlemen,

I beg to submit my annual report on the sanitary conditions and the state of the public health in the Brecon Rural District for the year 1955.

The arrangement of the report is in accordance with the directions contained in Circular 17/55(Wales), issued by the Welsh Board of Health.

Section 1. General and Vital Statistics.

Statistical Summary for the year 1955.

Area.....189,532 acres.
Population (Census 1951).....7430.
Population (Estimated at Midsummer,1955).....7490.
Number of inhabited houses.....2255.

Live Births.	Males.	Females.	Total.	Rate per 1000 Pop.
Legitimate	51	49	100	
Illegitimate	4	2	6	
	55	51	106	14.1
Still Births.	0	2	2	18.8
Deaths from all causes	55	36	91	12.1

Maternal Deaths.....Nil.

Deaths under one year.
All infants.....3. Rate per 1000 live births.....28.3
Legitimate infants.....3.

Deaths from special causes.
Infectious disease.....One.
Tuberculosis of respiratory system.....Two.
Other tubercular disease.....Nil.
Cancer.....Twelve.

Area.The Rural District of Brecon,which has an area of 189,532 acres, is a large district in the County of Breconshire.The district is situated mainly in the northern part of the County and consists of rather more than one-third of the total size of the whole County.

The district is agricultural in nature and farming is the predominant occupation of the inhabitants.

There are no large towns in the area and the administrative offices are situated in the Borough of Brecon.

Population. Census 1931.....8302.
Census 1951.....7430.

1945.	1946.	1947.	1948.	1949.	1950.	1951.	1952.	1953.	1954.	1955.
7057.	7074.	7065.	7113.	7042.	7178.	7338.	7432.	7464.	7480.	7490.

The above figures are the Registrar General's estimated figures for the various years.

The number of inhabited houses in the district was 2255 giving an average number of 3.3 persons per house.The above population figure includes members of the armed forces stationed in the area.

Brecon Rural District

Births.	Males.	Females.	Total.	Rate.
1946	71	60	131	18.4
1947	58	68	126	17.8
1948	74	62	136	19.1
1949	55	54	109	15.5
1950	57	59	116	16.1
1951	45	52	97	13.2
1952	53	54	107	14.3
1953	75	54	129	17.2
1954	60	44	104	13.9
1955	55	51	106	14.1
England and Wales,1955				15.0

It will be observed that the birthrate for the year under review was lower than the average for the whole of England and Wales and higher than the deathrate for the district.

Deaths.	Males.	Females.	Total.	Rate.
1946	43	42	85	12.0
1947	41	39	80	11.3
1948	45	38	83	11.6
1949	38	31	69	9.8
1950	40	51	91	12.9
1951	41	39	80	10.9
1952	48	37	85	11.4
1953	50	29	79	10.6
1954	51	32	83	11.0
1955	55	36	91	12.1
England and Wales,1955				11.7

The deathrate for 1955 was therefore higher than the average for the whole of England and Wales,but lower than the birthrate for the district.

Still Births.	Males.	Females.	Total.	Rate.
1946	1	4	5	0.71
1947	4	3	7	0.90
1948	4	4	8	1.1
1949	3	1	4	0.57
1950	2	1	3	0.41
1951	2	3	5	0.68
1952	3	1	4	0.53
1953	1	2	3	0.40
1954	3	0	3	28.0
1955	0	2	2	18.8
England and Wales,1955				23.1

The stillbirth rate was higher than the average for the whole of England and Wales.The rate is por 1000 live and still births.

Infantile Mortality.This is the number of deaths occurring in children of under one year of age.The rate is calculated per 1000 live births.

	Males.	Females.	Total.	Rate.
1946	1	1	2	15.
1947	3	4	7	55.
1948	4	1	5	36.
1949	2	0	2	18.
1950	1	1	2	17.1
1951	1	1	2	20.5
1952	1	0	1	9.3
1953	2	0	2	15.5
1954	1	0	1	9.6
1955	1	2	3	28.3
England and Wales,1955				24.9

The infantile mortality rate was higher than the average for the whole of England and Wales. All these deaths occurred in children of under 4 weeks old.

Analysis of Causes of Deaths. Males.....55. Females.....36

	Males.	Females.
Tuberculosis, respiratory	0	2.
Acute poliomyelitis	1	0.
Malignant neoplasm, stomach	5	1.
Malignant neoplasms, breast	0	1.
Other malignant neoplasms	3	2.
Vascular lesions, nervous system	9	7.
Coronary disease	2	6.
Hypertension with heart disease	1	1.
Other heart disease	20	9.
Other circulatory disease	3	0.
Pneumonia	1	1.
Bronchitis	0	3.
Hyperplasia of prostate	2	0.
Congenital malformations	1	0.
Other defined diseases	5	3.
Motor Vehicle accidents	1	0.
Suicide	1	0.

The deaths are classified under the headings given in the new Abridged List of Causes of Deaths.

Illegitimacy. The number of illegitimate births registered as belonging to residents in the district was six.

Maternal Mortality. There was no death during the year which could be attributed to childbirth.

Section 2. General Provisions of Health Services.

Public Health Officers. There was no change in your Public Health Officers during the year. Mr. W. J. Rees remained as your Chief Sanitary Inspector and Mr. R. Taylor as your Additional Sanitary Inspector.

Laboratory Facilities. During the year laboratory facilities were available at Cardiff, Newport, Carmarthen, Swansea, Aberystwyth and Brecon. Water samples were sent to the Public Analyst at Carmarthen and to the Public Health Laboratory at Cardiff, whilst any investigation required in the control of infectious disease was performed by the Public Health Laboratory at Cardiff. All the milk sampling including milk examined for the presence of tuberculosis was done by the Public Health Laboratory at Cardiff.

Nursing Facilities etc. The County Council are responsible for the provision of ambulance facilities, home nursing, maternity and child welfare, immunisation, and the treatment of minor ailments, dental, eye and orthopaedic defects.

Hospitals. The hospital needs of the residents of the district, for all diseases apart from infectious disease, are provided by the Brecon War Memorial Hospital. A certain number of patients are also treated in the large hospitals situated in Cardiff and Swansea.

The arrangements for the treatment of infectious disease remain the same as in previous years. Merthyr Borough Council treat the patients from the district suffering from infectious disease and these are conveyed to Merthyr in ambulances maintained by Merthyr Borough Council. These arrangements are proving extremely satisfactory.

For the treatment of cases of smallpox arrangements have been made by the Welsh Board of Health for beds to be available at the Penrhys Hospital, Rhondda.

Disinfection. In the main the methods used for any disinfection required have been fumigation and spraying.

Section 3. Sanitary Circumstances.

Water Supplies. Water is derived for domestic and other purposes in the district from 34 Council supplies, private supplies, wells and springs.

Generally speaking it is safe to say that the supply of water is poor, none of the supplies being chlorinated and only one filtered.

During the year 93 inspections of public and private supplies were carried out. The water from public supplies was sampled chemically on two occasions giving one satisfactory result and one unsatisfactory result. Fifteen samples of public supplies were also tested bacteriologically and of these, only four were satisfactory.

61 samples of private supplies were taken and, of these 13 were found to be satisfactory and 48 unsatisfactory. The majority of these samples were taken at the request of the Breconshire Agricultural Executive Committee in support of grant aided schemes for the provision of water to individual premises.

In all cases the Committee and the owners of the supplies were advised of the results of the analyses.

During the year substantial progress was made with the laying of the pipelines for the scheme, and by the end of the year the majority of this work amounting to some 98 miles was completed.

Reservoir construction also proceeded, and only the reservoirs at Aber Bran and Pen-y-Wingon have still to be constructed.

Towards the end of the year, the first section of mains in the Talybont area passed its final test, and after being sterilised satisfactorily, was handed over to the Council. A number of consumers in this area are now receiving supplies from the scheme. A further section of mains in the Llangorse and Pennorth areas has been tested satisfactorily and is undergoing sterilisation.

Revised plans for the treatment works at Pen-y-Wingon are almost complete, and after the settlement of final details, the order for the plant is to be placed.

A number of river crossings have been completed during the period, and preliminary works have begun for the erection of the booster stations for the Northern Valleys Scheme.

It will be seen from the above that adequate and wholesome supplies of water are very badly needed and the major scheme should be a great boon to the district.

Drainage and Sewerage. During the year Pencelly sewage scheme was completed. Good progress was also made on the Pennorth and Scethrog schemes. Approval from the Ministry was obtained in respect of the Llanfihangel Talyllyn scheme. This completes the sewerage scheme for the larger villages as outlined by the Council in 1947

Properties connected to main drainage. The response of owners to connecting up drainage arrangements to the Council's new sewers has been quite satisfactory. During the year, the following number of properties were provided with main drainage.

Llangorse	1.
Trecastle	1.
Talybont	2.

These additional figures brought the total at the end of the year to:-

Llangorse	61
Trecastle	47
Talybont	78
Llanfrynach	46
Cray	10
Llanddew	24
Total	266

Number of visits by Sanitary Inspector.....113.
Number of visits by Sanitary Inspector to sewage works.....50.

Public Cleansing.The collection and disposal of household refuse has been carried out during the year by contract labour under the supervision of the Chief Sanitary Inspector.A comprehensive scheme for the removal of refuse is now therefore in operation throughout the district.

The Council is at present maintaining 3 refuse tips. These are,however,filling rapidly and the securing of new tipping sites is likely to become very urgent.Temporary tipping facilities were also made use of in the Borough during the year.

Sanitary Inspection of the Area.The sanitary inspection of the area was undertaken by the Chief Sanitary Inspector,Mr.W.J.Rees,and the additional Sanitary Inspector Mr.Taylor.

The following summary gives information relating to the work of the sanitary inspectors during the year.

Nuisances.
Number of complaints received.....103.
Number of complaints investigated.....103.
Number of premises inspected.....103.
Number of premises revisited.....33.
Number of preliminary notices served.....26.
for (a) Structural defects.....19.
(b) Sanitary defects.....7.
Number of Statutory Notices served.....Nil.

The supply of building material during the year was somewhat improved and therefore it was easier to get necessary repairs carried out and so prevent decent property deteriorating.

Houses let in Lodgings.It is not considered that any of the houses in the district are of such a nature to require control under byelaws made under Section 6 of the Housing Act,1936.

Offensive Trades.There are no offensive trades in the district.

Common Lodging Houses.There are no common lodging houses in the district

Licensed Premises.

Number of visits made by Sanitary Inspector.....93.
Number of defects found.....0.

Shops.

Number of inspections made.....54.

Factories.A complete survey of the factories in the district was carried out with the following results:-

Total number of factories.....19.
Total number of inspections made.....54.
Total number of defects found(want of cleanliness and insufficient sanitary conveniences).....22.

Tents, Vans & Sheds.

Number of visits made.....107.

Eradication of bed bugs and steps taken to combat infestation.

Any premises found as a result of inspection or complaint to be infested with bed bugs or other vermin is treated with D.D.T. preparations which have been found very successful.
No premises were found infested during the year.

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Rodent Control. Mr. J. C. Reynolds, having been transferred to the Rates Department, has been replaced by Mr. I. Richards, who now carries out the work of rodent control. He is assisted in this work by Mr. John Price.

Details of the work carried out are given below:-

Number of premises inspected.....40.
Number of premises found infested.....40.
Number of agricultural premises found infested.....2.
Number of premises treated by Rodent Officer.....40.
Number of premises treated by occupier.....0.
Number of premises treated by B.A.E.C.....2.

Sewers were treated during the year in the neighbourhood of infested houses.

Section 4. Housing. The following details show the housing position as it was at the end of the year.

Number of houses built by Council during the year.....37.
Number of houses built by private enterprise during the year. Nil.

Number of inspections under Housing Act.....210.

Improvement Grants, Housing Act, 1949. Fourteen applications were made, all were approved during the year and grants made.

Rural Housing Survey. This was continued during the year. The following figures show the position at the end of the year.

Work during the year:-		Category 1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
Number inspected	167	26.	22.	25.	30.	64.
Previously inspected	1847	294.	293.	393.	456.	411.
Totals	2014	320.	315.	418.	486.	475.

Housing Consolidated Regulations 1925 & 1932.

The district is being inspected as has already been referred to under the paragraph dealing with the Housing Survey.

As and when the occasion necessitates representation is made to the Council with a view to:-

(a) Serving of notices requiring the execution of works or
(b) The making of demolition or closing orders.

Demolition orders made - 17
Undertakings accepted - 5
Properties demolished - 8

Section 5. Inspection and Supervision of Food.

The number of food premises in the area was as follows:-

Retailers.....16.
Ice cream retailers.....8.
Bakers.....2.
Cafes.....4.
Hotels where meals are served.....12.

On the whole it can be said that the general standard of cleanliness observed was satisfactory. On no occasion has it been necessary to serve a notice on any person engaged in the food trade.

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There was no educational activity in connection with food in the district during the year but in the normal course of their duties the Sanitary Inspectors, in their discussions with persons engaged in the food trade, emphasised the importance of the need for the highest standard of hygienic principle in the preparation and sale of foodstuffs to the public.

Meat Inspection.

Number of Registered Slaughterhouses in Area - 1
Number of Inspections made to Slaughterhouse - 97
Number of various animals inspected

Beasts	Cows	Sheep	Calves	Pigs
13	25	423	26	123

Meat affective with Diseases -

	Diseases	Livers		Lungs		Heads		Total Car cases & all Organs	
		Whole or Part	lbs	Whole or Part	lbs	No.	lbs	No.	lbs.
Bovine	Distomatosis Echinococcus) Veterinorum)	11	70½					11	70½
				2	5¾			2	5¾
	Cirrhosis Cavernous)	6	64					6	64
	Angioma)	2	25¾					2	25¾
	Tuberculosis			1	12			1	12
Sheep	Distomatosis	8	17					8	17
	Cirrhosis	5	13					5	13
	Strongylus) Rufescens)			10	37¾			10	37¾
	Pleurisy			1	1½			1	1½
Pigs	Tuberculosis					2	24¾	2	24¾
Calves	Necroses	1	2					1	2
Totals		33	192¼	14	57	2	24¾	49	274

Carcases and offal inspected and condemned in whole or part

	Cattle excluding cows	Cows	Calves	Sheep & Lambs	Pigs	Horses
Number killed	13	25	26	423	123	-
Number inspected	13	25	26	423	123	-
All diseases except tuberculosis & cysticerci						
Whole carcases condemned	-	-	-	-	-	-
Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned	6	10	1	67	-	-
Percentage of the number inspected affected with disease other than tuberculosis and cysticerci	46.15%	40.0%	3.84%	15.83%	-	-
Tuberculosis only						
Whole carcases condemned	-	-	-	-	-	-
Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned	-	1	-	-	1	-
Percentage of the number inspected affected with tuberculosis	-	4%	-	-	0.813%	-

Cysticercis. No cases discovered

All condemned meat from the Slaughterhouse is collected by a fertiliser making firm from Newport.

Disposal of Condemned Food. All condemned foodstuffs excluding meat are disposed of by burying in one of the Council's refuse disposal sites.

Milk. Considerable changes in the legislature governing the production of milk occurred by the coming into operation on October 1st. 1949 of the Food and Drugs (Milk and Dairies) Act, 1944. Briefly under this Act the supervision of milk production on farms now oasses to the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries and Local Authorities are left with the control of distributors.

Number of samples taken during the year.....52.
Number of samples satisfactory.....48.
Number of samples unsatisfactory.....4.

The result of all these samples were sent to the Milk Sub-Committee of the Ministry at Brecon.

Thirty four samples of milk were submitted during the year for the presence of tuberculosis and all proved negative.

Food Preparation Rooms (including bakehouses).

Number of inspections made.....29.

Ice Cream Premises.

Number of inspections made.....6.
Number of samples taken.....12.
All these samples were reported as satisfactory.

There are 8 premises registered for the sale of ice cream.

Preserved Food Premises.

Number of inspections made.....29.

Fish and Fried Fish Shops.

Number of inspections made.....2.
There was one premises registered for the sale of fried fish.

Section 6. Prevalence and Control of Infectious Disease.

The following cases of notifiable infectious disease were reported to me during the year:-

Measles.....79 cases.
Acute encephalitis.....1 case.
Acute primary pneumonia.....1 case.
Whooping Cough.....5 cases.
Acute poliomyelitis.....7 cases.
Food Poisoning.....1 case.
Paratyphoid.....1 case.

The cases of measles were, on the whole, mild and were all nursed at home. All the cases of poliomyleitis were admitted to hospital where one died and the others made a satisfactory recovery. Only four of these poliomyelitis cases were confirmed.
In spite of the most thorough investigation the primary cause of both the cases of food poisoning and that of paratyphoid remained unknown.

Venereal Disease. The County Council has an agreement with the General and Eye Hospital, Swansea, for the treatment of these cases. The tracing of contacts and the following up of defaulters is the responsibility of the County Council.

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Tuberculosis. The following details show the position as regards tuberculosis in recent years.

Number of cases on the register at commencement of year.....36.
Number of fresh cases notified during the year.....13.
Number of cases removed from register
(a) Deaths.....2.
(b) Left district.....4.
(c) Disease arrested.....3.
Number of cases remaining on register at end of year.....40.

The number of cases notified in recent years is shown below:-

1945.	1946.	1947.	1948.	1949.	1950.	1951.	1952.	1953.	1954.	1955.
4.	9.	5.	8.	7.	11.	13.	4.	3.	5.	13.

Diphtheria Immunisation. As a result of the new Health Act, the County Council are responsible for the immunisation of children against diphtheria and details for the district will be found in the annual report of the County Medical Officer.

There were no cases of diphtheria in the district during the year.

It is pleasing to see that the incidence of diphtheria continues to fall. The object of the immunisation campaign, however, remains the same: to secure the immunisation of not less than 75% of babies before their first birthday. During the first half of 1955, however, it is disturbing to note that only 31.4% of the estimated number of children reaching the age of one year during this period received this protection. It must be remembered that diphtheria still kills and that elimination of the disease is conditional upon the maintenance of an adequate level of immunisation. If parents leave their children unprotected there may be a return of diphtheria outbreaks, and there have been several sharp reminders of this possibility during the year under review.

In the preparation of this report I have endeavoured to deal briefly with all matters within my responsibility regarding public health and preventive medicine and I have included all the subjects specifically requested by the Welsh Board of Health.

Yours faithfully,

T.C.R.George,

Medical Officer of Health